

ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONER SUPPORT

August 2012

Donation

arprisoners.org

Issue Number 8





Important message for supporters and friends of ARPS

Please note this will be the last final ARPS newsletter. The BM Box address will also no longer be in operation.

ARPS was set up because, for legal reasons, some prisoners were not permitted to write for other newsletters. So the ARPS newsletter has enabled those prisoners to get their news and

views out to supporters for the past few years.

However that situation has now passed, and so the ARPS newsletter would now be just duplicating the job very ably done by the ALF Supporters Group (www.alfsg.org.uk). To find out more about the ALF SG and their

newsletter, contact info@alfsg.org.uk

Thanks to all of you who have supported ARPS, and helped us to help the prisoners. Please continue to give your support to all of those imprisoned in struggle for freedom and justice for all creatures.

About ARPS

Animal Rights Prisoner Support (ARPS) is a voluntary group which supports those campaigners who, as a result of their efforts to prevent innocent animals being caged, abused and killed, are themselves jailed because of their selfless acts on behalf of those who cannot speak up for themselves.

We live in a world where profit and property are valued over life and compassion, where those who try to stop suffering are seen as criminals and terrorists because they threaten the economic system and the status quo. As long as this continues to be the case, it is vital we support those activists who make the ultimate sacrifice.

Once in prison they are often isolated, separated from family and friends and from other campaigners. This is a calculated part of the process of imprisonment, intended to be a punishment, and a deterrent to others. Yet these are good people who have acted out of compassion rather than for their own personal gain.

ARPS supports the prisoners in various ways. Our main aim is to break through this isolation and provide the prisoners with support, morally and practically, keeping them in touch with the outside world and enabling them to continue to be a valuable part of the movement.

We have a website where we publicise the plights of the prisoners, their prison addresses and encourage supporters and sympathisers from around the world to write them letters and cards, and let them know they are not forgotten. This is essential for the upkeep of the prisoners' morale and keeping them in touch with what is going on in the outside world.

We also publish letters, articles and news directly from the prisoners on the internet, giving supporters and friends an invaluable insight into what life is like for animal rights prisoners.

We are in regular contact with the prisoners and friends, and endeavour to support them in various practical ways and look after their interests in whatever way we can.

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Gavin Medd-Hall's letter



Hi All,

Greetings from sunny Surrey where the sun always shines, even during our wettest drought! Just the quality lags left to go now, they always

leave the best till last.

Life is still good here, and with only 6 months left, getting better all the time.

Although Probation recommended a move to more open conditions for me last year, this was over-ruled by an admin. clerk here. Clearly the clerk had read the email from the civil servant at the Ministry of Injustice regarding the treatment of political prisoners.

This issue will be resolved by a judicial review I have going, which is due its day in court "any day"! Certainly, the State wins hands down in the "time wasting" Olympic event.

Whilst on the subject of its being a funny old world, I've now had it confirmed in writing that I am no longer considered an escape risk. Yes, they did actually label me as such, despite the fact that I am blind! I can only think that my interest in the prisoners' pole vaulting event was somewhat

misunderstood. Still, time has always passed quickly here.

My day job is learning about computer networks, very handy in this increasingly connected world.

I've also learnt about website development and administration, and photo manipulation using Photoshop. All interesting skills to know for whatever my next career is. I should mention that the very nice people who run the computer courses here have provided me with a large monitor which, coupled with magnification software, has made it all possible.

My reading or rather listening is expanding all the time with an excellent supply of audio books. From the history of Agincourt to Dickens, Hardy and Bronte and bang up to date with recent Booker prize-winning authors, it's a fascinating journey to travel, and great that I have the time to do it!

No prisoner's letter would be complete without tales of amazing feats of physical workouts in the gym! Don't worry, you couch potatoes, I won't shame you or make you break out into a sweat! Needless to say, I do enough to just about keep on top of things.

Seeing how the prison service copes with my disability reminds me very much of my school days. As then, they don't understand disability, especially a

hidden one such as visual impairment, so they try to ignore it. Though to put the record straight on education, when I eventually took up further and then higher education it was a very different story. Fantastic people willing to assist if needed. A sharp contrast here where, in the early days of my stay, I was refused an orderly job in the education dept. because of my disability. I have some success in getting information in large print. But all too often they revert to type and the complaints have to go in again...

I think the most bizarre decision I've encountered concerns our newest travel-lodge style wing. It has a couple of what are termed disabled cells (not 'cos they've been smashed up, though that is a common enough occurrence). I'm officially barred from residing on that wing, so the cells remain populated in the main by rapists, granny bashers and the like. Indeed, anyone but me... cannot think why.

Well, I'll bring these assorted ramblings to an end now by thanking all those who have supported me throughout my sentence. You know who you are and you've made all the difference. Special thanks go to my long-suffering partner, Jan, who has had her own sentence to do.

See you around,
Gavin

Writing to Prisoners



Receiving letters from the outside helps to stop prisoners feeling isolated and other prisoners are always amazed at the amount of mail animal rights prisoners receive.

When you first start up correspondence with a prisoner, try not to ask specific questions, so prisoners don't feel under pressure to give a response. Please don't feel offended if you don't get a reply, or if a reply is a long time coming, as animal rights prisoners often receive large amounts of mail. They also frequently have ongoing legal matters to deal with, which can be

a lengthy process. Consideration must be given to the fact that prisoners may not have time or that they may not feel like writing.

Keep letters positive and avoid angry rants. Talk about your campaigns, what is going on in your daily life or just send a bright card with a short note or a favourite quote. You can buy small packets of cards from many stationers and card shops which are really useful for keeping in touch with the prisoners.

Write to UK animal rights prisoners via email

Did you know that it is possible to write to the prisoners in the UK via the "emailprisoner" service for just 30p per letter, cheaper, quicker and more convenient than conventional mail.

You pay in advance and register with

an email address and password. It works really well, usually prisoners get the letter the same day or the next day. They can't reply via email, but apparently this is in the pipeline, as well as the opportunity to send pictures.

It's a really great way to keep our comrades in touch with the outside world. For example, if you see some news online or in an email, you can just copy and paste it into an email and send it directly to the prisoner, with some news of your own perhaps. Or why not put a few stories and some news together, as you get 2,500 characters per email.

These prisoners can currently receive emails:

Gavin Medd-Hall (HMP Coldingley)
Heather Nicholson (HMP Send)
Mel Broughton (HMP Bullingdon)

For more details visit:
www.emailprisoner.com

Interview with Sarah Gisbourne

Somewhere deep in the heart of Malaysia... Sarah is ambushed by hundreds of dogs everyday and greeted by 120 cats, (separately of course!)

ARPS: What led you to leave the UK and why Asia?

Sarah: In a nutshell I was helping out at an animal sanctuary in Northamptonshire where I met and became good friends with a real genuine animal person from Malaysia. We both started to discuss how much there is to be done in Asia and when she went back we started to look at the options of me going over there to see what I could do to help. I was not thinking in the short term but the long term.

ARPS: What have you been doing since you arrived there?

Sarah: When I first got here I was volunteering with a group in Singapore called 'Acres'. I was dealing mostly with wildlife: snakes, iguanas, turtles etc. They have a 24hr hotline for wildlife rescue and I went out on call with them and helped with the day-to-day care of all those wonderful characters, falling in love with a tortoise named 'Jaywalker', an iguana named 'Valerie' and a snapping turtle named 'Tyrant', and he really was a naughty boy!

While at Acres, the founder, a very genuine man 'Louis Ng' a Singaporean, informed me of a project in Laos re Bears from a bear farm and his intentions of ending bear farming in



Laos for good. I was very interested and told him that I would be willing to help in any way that I could. I'm sure that most people in the UK are now aware of the atrocities those bears endure for sometimes decades before the release of death comes. That was that, I signed up for the foreseeable future to help with the rehabilitation of these confiscated bears and release them into plush green enclosures where they will be safe for the rest of their lives. The problem is at the moment it cannot be made public as we don't want to tip off the farmers where the bears are held, so we are just waiting for last bits of paperwork to be done before we can get the bears officially and then go public. So as you can imagine, raising funds for something that cannot be made public is proving quite difficult. With just 8 bear bile farms in Laos it is very likely that they could be phased out compared to say China where there are countless farms. Laos' government is very interested in the eco tourist idea that would generate good income for the local economy so are very supportive of the idea of looking like they care. If any of you would like to know more on this issue or if you would like to contribute to this project, (which is being built from scratch) please email me: daisygisborne@live.co.uk or 'acres' directly: louis@acres.org.sg

While I am waiting for this project to unfold I am back in Malaysia volunteering at 'furryfriendsfarm'. It rescues mainly street dogs and cats. It is very overwhelming the amount of dogs and cats who try to survive on the

streets here in a very hard existence for them. There is no big project to neuter and spay here so the numbers are huge. At furryfriends I am trying to make the dogs lives more comfortable by making beds for them and de-ticking them all. Bathing them and generally trying to help the founder who is pretty much on her own and in much need of help to do the best for these fantastic dogs and cats. Everyday these dogs and cats give me the most heartwarming welcome you could imagine, brings me to tears daily... If anyone would like to come to help, hands on and get your hands dirty, you will be rewarded by the gratitude of these amazing loving personalities. Or if you would like to help maybe by sponsoring a dog or a new enclosure, there are also calendars for 2012 which we can send for roughly the equivalent of 5 pounds. They are really nice. If anyone out there would be willing to up-date the furryfriendsfarm website (www.furryfriendsfarm.org.my) that would be very much appreciated too. Sabrina the founder just does not have



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time, she works 7 days a week and has not had a day off for 5 years. For any enquiries contact me (as above) or Sabrina. sabrinayeap@gmail.com

ARPS: It is over 3 years since you finished your sentence here in the UK, has it changed you as a person?

Sarah: I would have to say from my own perspective that it made me grow stronger and more resilient and less likely to take crap off anyone. That has been the case since 1999 when I started to be a vocal voice for animals instead of just getting sad about things internally. I became confident and determined and that just grows as the years pass and yes as we all know the older we get the quicker they pass. These are not just words. They are the truth, that in fighting for and becoming an advocate for something other than yourself, gives you an inner strength you never thought existed within you. I like who I am and what I am.

Here is an example of how hard our struggle is: I was eating at a roadside restaurant a few nights ago and the Malay guy asked my business. I replied, "I rescue and care for animals". His reply to that was, "I didn't know anyone cared for animals". This is how and why we have to be strong, confident, educated and determined to do what we can while we are here for this short time.

ARPS: How do you support yourself financially?

Sarah: Thankfully I have some very loyal and generous friends and sister who sponsor me. I live out of my suitcase, food is cheap here and I try to get accommodation included where I go. The most expensive thing is traveling around from place to place as I don't have my own transport here. I don't know long term but I am sure things will work out.

ARPS: Do you keep up to date with events in the UK and the animal rights movement here?

Sarah: When I can, I walk into town to the local internet cafe and look at what's been happening. I like to keep informed with what is happening with the campaigns and what is happening regarding all the prisoners including the international ones. The ARPS is great for sending me all the updates via email. The unspoken love I have for anyone who feels the suffering for the defenseless is always with me.

ARPS: Thank you Sarah and we wish you well.

Sarah: I hope you all stay safe and well and that there will always be people who fight for change for animals. Please get in touch if you would like to help with any of the above projects, many thanks.

Sarah Whitehead's letter



Hi everyone,

Well, it's less than 2 weeks until my release – so that was the fastest four years of my life! I feel ready to leave now; I've learnt so much, I've studied and read a huge variety of books, and I'm hopefully wiser, less judgemental and more considerate.

It's been amazing to hear of liberations and steps-forward in the fight against cruelty. You are all doing fantastic work out there. All this time I've been sitting in prison whilst you battle on – prisoners, eh? So many bourbon

biscuits, so little time.

How can I put into words my appreciation for all the support I've had – it's been truly fantastic and I'm so humbled by it all. A huge thank you to VPSG, ARPS, ALFSG and Honesty for making being a vegan animal rights prisoner plain sailing. Nothing was ever too much trouble for you all and it's been no mean feat getting past prison red tape at times!

Thank you a million times to all those who sorted out my house when I came to prison and for taking on my darling animals, loving them and putting them first all the time. You all know who you are and I know I will never find truer friends. I owe you all so much.

I've got licence conditions that stop all contact with AR people, any work with animals, and any access to animal campaigning – but time will pass and things will get back to normal pretty quickly I think. So for now please accept my heartfelt, overwhelming thanks to all who have written, visited, listened to me on the phone, tolerated my moods (shall we say 'menopause' and leave it at that?!) and generally been there for me throughout the 4 years. How lucky am I to know you – you are a credit to the Movement, the fight against injustice and the compassion that drives us. I believe

that all life is one, that we are all capable of good and evil and that everyone can change. Let's keep on standing up for what is right. Unless we can change hearts and minds we will never win. I read this recently, and thought how true:

"If only there were evil people somewhere, insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them! But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being, and who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Please continue to support sanctuaries like Tower Hill stables (Fiona Oakes) and Feline Care, rescue groups like Nowzad Dogs (Afghanistan) and New Life Parrot Rescue, and all campaigns for animals and humans fighting to make the world a better, fairer, more peaceful place. It can be done!

Thank you everyone so much.

With lots of love,

Sarah xxx



Mel Broughton (A3892AE)

HMP Bullingdon, PO Box 50, Bicester, Oxon OX25 1WD

Mel was remanded on 14 December 2007 and was sentenced on 13th February 2009 to 10 years for animal rights related offences against Oxford University animal lab.

On 13th July 2010, at his re-trial, Mel was found guilty of conspiracy to commit arson. He has to serve the remainder of his 10 year sentence.

Birthday: 5th July

What you can send: cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor' (write your name and address and Mel's name and number on the back). Stamps (maximum 12), stationary, SAE's. 'Email a prisoner' is in place at this prison. For more details see www.emailaprisoner.com



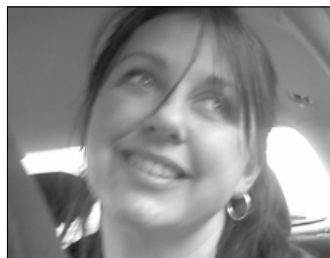
Gavin Medd-Hall (A3624AD)

HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX

In January 2009 Gavin was sentenced to 8 years for conspiracy to blackmail in connection with the SHAC campaign.

Birthday: 20th March

What you can send: stamps (12 in letter), SAEs, cheques/postal orders payable to 'HMPS' (write your name and address and Gavin's name and number on the back). NO stationery. (Please remember that Gavin has poor eyesight and will appreciate if you write in clear, large writing). 'Email a prisoner' is in place at this prison. For more details see www.emailaprisoner.com



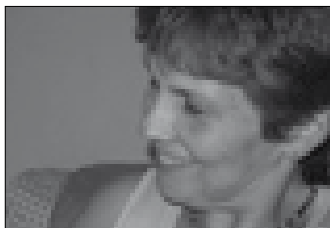
Heather Nicholson (A3158AJ)

C1-01, HMP Send, Ripley Road, Send, Surrey, GU23 7LJ

Heather was remanded in May 2007 and sentenced in January 2009 to 11 years for conspiracy to blackmail in connection with the SHAC campaign.

Birthday: 30th January

What you can send: cheques/postal orders made out to 'HM Prison Service' (write your name and address and Heather's name and number on the back). Stamps; an SAE. NO stationery or blank cards. 'Email a prisoner' is in place at this prison. For more details see www.emailaprisoner.com



Sarah Whitehead **Released 29th June 2012**

On the 25th October 2010 Sarah was sentenced to 6 years for conspiracy to blackmail in connection with the SHAC campaign.

Lewis Pogson's letter



July 2008 saw my arrest for the liberation of over 120 imprisoned individuals and roughly £75,000 worth of damage caused to Highgate Farm, a vivisection laboratory breeder in Lincolnshire. Whilst many think of conviction and imprisonment as the result of capture in such actions, increasingly the state is using deprivation, both pre-trial and post-imprisonment as a weapon against political activists. Although I was finally released from prison in November 2010, it was not until April 2012 that my sentence finished. After my release from prison, I was forced to serve the remainder of the sentence 'on license, under supervision in the community' – in other words, I was on probation.

Officially, probation is meant to manage ex-prisoners and help them re-integrate back into society, under the assurances of 'protecting the public'. However my experience, throughout prison and probation, has taught me that there is miniscule rehabilitation, and what exists, is negated by the system that contains it. Probation follows the role of

the prison – it is designed to isolate and dehumanise the individual, marginalising them from society and perpetuating the cycle of imprisonment and ‘reoffending’ that exists in England today. The main aspect of probation is regular appointments with a proclaimed ‘officer.’ It is difficult to summarise the entire probation period, as unlike police interviews, no record of accountability is made, but I think it is important to explain my experiences, so that people are informed as to what is being done in their name, and those that may find themselves undergoing such an experience have some idea of what to expect.

Throughout my time in prison I had virtually no contact with probation. On arrival at each prison I would be asked about the nature of my imprisonment and that was it – not one single official ever approached me to ask why I did what I did. The most memorable interaction I can remember was shortly after I had arrived in a new prison and was asked what the burglary conviction related to – when I explained that it was the liberation of over a hundred rabbits the lady couldn’t help but crack up into a fit of hysterics, only to excuse herself before shortly returning and apologising. However, because of the peculiarity of my case, my story was of deep interest to other prisoners – on a daily basis I would be questioned by intrigued individuals, and on a number of occasions whole education classes became dominated by debates that started with the question ‘you’re the animal activist, aren’t you?’ There were a lot of informative and sometimes humorous exchanges – from the gentleman who assumed they were ‘Rampant Rabbits’ to the one who told me that when he got out he was going to liberate some animals, ‘but something good, like a gorilla.’ Like the other prisoners, the system defined me by the events that had led me to prison, so naturally after nearly four years of being treated only in this manner, the fact that in the past I have taken a stand for decent treatment for non-humans, has become deeply engrained and an important focus of my life. Now I am able to do so, it is second nature to return to the only thing I know; one of the greatest causes the world has seen: the fight for the rights of those living, thinking, feeling individuals that suffer the most abusive injustice purely because they do not walk on two legs nor speak a language humanity recognises.

The first time I was ever officially informed that after prison I would be under further obligation was the morning of my release. I was told to return to South London and meet with a probation officer by a certain time otherwise I’d be coming back. As I had very little previous experience with probation I approached it with an open mind and a willingness to engage. Not only is it important to treat the unfamiliar with respect, but a great deal can be learnt through dialogue. However, the deep hostility towards probation that a lot of prisoners I lived with had taught me to be cautious. To give an example, during an induction period inside (when a new arrival is introduced to the particular institution) a lady from an outside group that deals with prisoners’ complaints mentioned that she could speak to probation on behalf of the prisoners. The response from a room of thirty or forty was largely boos and jeers. Regardless, I held that as I had never really spoken to probation before, I should reserve judgement.

The person I met was to become the main officer I saw through my license period, but by no means was he the only person involved. Although on the surface he was a perfectly pleasant man without malice and was enthusiastic and friendly; he lacked both the knowledge of my case and the wider context it exists in, as well as the intelligence to

be able to satisfactorily converse with me. If I am honest, by the end, I considered him lazy and incompetent. I remember at my first appointment I mentioned that I might want to do some work at a greyhound rescue; his response was to ask me what a greyhound was. How was I meant to have meaningful conversations about such important subjects as speciesism and carnism with someone who lacked even a child’s knowledge of animals? Soon two key concerns of probation were made clear: firstly that they were very worried about negative press coverage and this would affect the way they handled their cases, and secondly they were very worried about newly released prisoners ‘reoffending’. This attitude not only endorsed the idea that prison as a deterrent does not work, but helped lessen its impact. This latter concern was confusing as anybody that knows me would tell you that my priorities upon release were drinking beer and listening to punk rock, not breaking the law!

The further obligation of probation did not stop with mere appointments – like most other released prisoners I was also given a license – a set of conditions that affect travel, work and life in general that you are forced to comply with under threat of reimprisonment. The first condition on any licence is the vague ‘be well behaved...’ That behaviour is not defined anywhere and is left to the discretion of the probation officers themselves. I was informed they ‘only need suspicion’ that these conditions are breached to implement reimprisonment. Effectively it is internment. With this threat ever present, building a relationship built on trust and respect proves difficult. My license was initially ‘standard’, meaning it was the basic one that every licensee receives, but approximately two weeks later as the probation officer’s demeanour changed, so did my license. According to him, the prison system hadn’t properly prepared my release and forgot a few things: I was now a MAPPA case considered ‘a high risk of reoffending’ and a ‘medium risk of serious harm to the public.’ Never was I given an explanation as to why the system had suddenly decided to consider me like this, but the impression that I got, validated by the probation officer’s acknowledgement that there were “senior” people involved, was that up until then I had been treated as an ordinary prisoner. It seemed the police and perhaps Home Office bureaucrats had forgotten all about me and now they were making up for lost time. This new and drastic change meant that whatever work and plans I had made whilst inside to reintegrate back into society, upon my release had to be at least post-poned, if not scrapped all together. My licence was to change four times in the immediate months. It seemed they were unsure what they were doing and how exactly to manage me.

MAPPA stands for Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and is for those considered the most dangerous in the criminal justice system. There are three levels; one for highly violent individuals, one for sexual offenders, and the ambiguous ‘other’ category. As I quite literally wouldn’t harm a fly, I became the latter, as I’m sure a great many other political activists have, or will experience. The Multi-Agency aspect involves a whole alphabet soup of shadowy and secretive organisations including prison agencies, probation, government officials and various branches of the police. Once a month they meet to conspire and plot the life of an individual who is not even entitled to attend these meetings. The ex-prisoners and their reintegration back into society is not directed by the prison staff or low-level probation officers who they have regular dealings with and have built up some sort of relationship, but by faceless bureaucrats who have little understanding of the

situation, a political agenda to eradicate any sort of dissent regardless of legality, and an inability to fully understand the impact of their actions. Along with this MAPPA status came further licence conditions – to keep me away from Highgate Farm, but they also stopped me possessing a mobile phone or using the Internet. It is beyond me how someone trying to reintegrate back into a society like ours is meant to do so without the use of these things. The justification was that it would stop me looking at 'extremist' websites. As I do not know what 'extremism' is, I asked for some examples but probation couldn't or wouldn't tell me. It left me puzzled and wondering what other aspects of culture are they going to try and suppress? Music, literature, art? Perhaps soon we will see an English Ai Weiwei.

The biggest aspect of my licence was the fact that I was to 'notify (the probation) officer prior to any contact or relationship with individuals or organisations engaged in demonstrations or activity concerned with Animal Welfare or the Rights of Animals, unless otherwise instructed by your supervising officer.' It was an incredibly far-reaching and fanatical licence condition, which the probation officer did not understand and could not explain. He was unable even to define what constituted animal welfare and 'rights of animals', though he maintained that it was perfectly clear. Generally, when challenged on issues of such matters he had two default responses; one was to shrug his shoulders and smile in an empathetic manner, the other was to say that he "understood this was all very hard and thought it was a good cause that I fought for, and that I just needed to keep my head down and then when it was all over I could go back to what I was doing." This condition would make it difficult for me to contact potentially hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people given the English reputation as a 'nation of animal lovers.' Effectively, it was designed to stop me doing any activity involving non-humans, but the language it was written in disguised this. For in the eyes of the law it says that all that is needed is the approval from probation, not acknowledging that probation only has the responses: 'no' and 'ask again in a couple of months' time.'

The justification for this MAPPA status was the seriousness of the nature of my conviction, yet all other animal rights prisoners released in recent years are suffering similar experiences. It has little to do with what you've actually done - more so the reason why you've done it. It is wholly political. I was described as 'manipulative' yet had 'shortfalls (in) making the right decisions and lack(ing) of assertiveness.' Not only was this incredibly insulting and disempowering to someone meant to reestablish himself within society, but it lacked any evidence or explanation. Of course, now with such a history on my record, the next time the authorities need to use me to make an example of the animal rights movement, no doubt I will be described as some sort of 'ring-leader' and finding someone from probation prepared to come to court and counter these claims will be impossible.

After two months of release, I was picked up by the police and returned to prison totally out of the blue. Two weeks later I found out it was because I had attended a small, peaceful picket of the Harrods fur shop. Apparently, this meant I was 're-establishing links with animal rights extremists' and holding a placard meant I was 'an active participant...as opposed to merely attending.' Whilst the two months spent in prison on recall is an article in itself, it did teach me some valuable lessons. Firstly, that probation were quick to condemn yet slow to reason. It shattered any credibility in the authorities' claims that they 'protect the right to peacefully demonstrate' and finally, it was a clear

illustration that I would not be allowed to live any sort of law abiding normal life. For regardless of how I acted, I would be persecuted for my beliefs.

On re-release I had the big wheel at the cracker factory come to see me; a Senior Probation Officer from the Central Extremist Unit was needed to do what the usual one wasn't capable of. From the outset he was aggressive and hostile and it was clear that he wanted to dominate the proceedings. I was told that I was a 'violent extremist' and that these licence conditions were purposely ambiguous 'to stop me working around them' which directly contradicted his colleague's claim. When I asked for some written clarification about the matter he got extremely defensive and bellowed 'I'm not going to sit here and write everything I say down.' Within probation there is a remarkable lack of recorded information but then evidence does lead to accountability. The conversation then moved onto a series of questions about myself in an effort 'to get to know me.' What sort of person judges someone before they have even spoken with them? He tried to provoke me, to push my buttons, but an introduction like that brought an end to any serious attempts at dialogue on my part. I pointed out the absurdity of these licence conditions, explaining that they would stop me from even putting a can of food in a rescue centre donation bin. With a smile on his face he agreed that they did, as if some sort of victory had been achieved. The pathetic nature of his character continued to come across in the 2 or 3 following appointments I had with him. After it dawned on him that he would not be able to goad me into some sort of reaction he tried a different approach: trying to act in stern, paternal manner explaining to me the realities of life. The usual bollocks of "I know where you're coming from – my auntie's milkman's nephew's ex-girlfriend's brother is a vegetarian and I once stroked a dog." My refusal to engage lead to him advising me that 'I should decide what I wanted to be doing' but I explained that I did not see the probation period as being about my wants, to which he agreed. This type of empty rhetoric ran through probation and the different officers I saw. It quickly became apparent that they would say whatever sounded good at the time and routinely contradict or change their positions. He made all sorts of promises that were never fulfilled: the offer of a mobile phone, an activist legal advice manual and victim impact statements, but I knew as soon as he mentioned them, they were lies. It is strange sitting in a room being lied to, as in public life it is uncommon. Universally, it is almost impossible to find a culture that respects such dishonest behaviour. What concerned me though was not being able to distinguish whether they were purposely lying or whether it had become compulsive behaviour. This meant that assurances such as 'if I comply' and do 'well' on my licence period over time, the conditions would diminish, could not be taken seriously – they had no intention of doing that, the licence conditions were designed to keep me away from doing any work that helped non-human animals – they were using it as a further punishment after they failed to convince the judge to serve an ASBO. The senior extremist probation officer took it very personally when I refused to shake his hand, and later went on at length about his past life as if it was of interest to anyone but himself. Once, bizarrely, he inquired whether I was going to write a book and if so, I wasn't to mention his name. If meeting someone a handful of times is a great enough influence on your life, that you record it in your biography, then just think what the effect of living with hundreds of other prisoners, day in, day out, has. Anyway, if I were to write a book, I'd probably get done for incitement.

There was never any structure or plan to the probation appointments. Every time I attended I was walking into a room unsure of what would be addressed. The reasons behind my imprisonment were barely touched upon – mentioned perhaps only once or twice. It seemed as if they did not want to discuss it. For the initial appointments there was a great deal of interest in my views on the recent student demonstrations at Millbank Towers. It seemed as if any sort of anti-governmental demonstration was of importance. As I have never been on a violent demonstration, have no interest in attending one, had little knowledge of the student fees cause and was not a student, I didn't understand the relevance. The prosecution of my case focused on the idea that the action at Highgate Farm was not a protest, but a serious attempt at disrupting a 'lawful business.' Now probation were acting in a revisionist manner trying to make out that I had some sort of issues with protests. Largely we had informal conversations about current affairs. Whilst I can understand my reaction to certain events and problems can give an insight into patterns of thinking that are important for probation officers to understand, the relaxed nature of these conversations seemed as if the probation officer was just trying to kill some time. On one occasion he spent forty minutes telling me about some American crime thriller novel he had read on holiday, only to repeat the conversation a month or so later, having forgotten he had told me all about it previously. He had some bizarre assertions when it came to the law; such as dog licences being a legal requirement and there being no clause for self-defence within English law. Even though I knew both of these claims were erroneous, I found it strange that the individual tasked with making me respect the law had an incorrect understanding of it. What else did he tell me that was just plain wrong? As for rehabilitation, I believe this consisted of one appointment with a private contractor involved in education whose, (whilst positive about my personal plans), main advice was to 'google courses,' and two group meetings with another private company; one to write a CV, which ain't much use if you've got nothing to put on it, and another one about interview techniques. The consensus from the ex-prisoners in the room, on the knowledge that failure to declare a record once asked is a criminal offence, was that they wouldn't admit to their records. The probation officer also advised me to mislead the Jobcentre about my circumstances so that I could claim benefits. On numerous occasions I would turn up to probation appointments, only to be there for a number of minutes whilst the next appointment was scheduled. Once, during winter I turned up only to be told that a memo had come through from head office telling probation officers not to keep people too long as the heating hadn't been turned on yet! To anyone who has experienced prison and its systematic heating schedule, this is a joke. However, every appointment would start in a similar manner, with the probation officer asking me if I was okay and if there were "any problems." I would use this opportunity to explain that the only problems I had in my life were being caused by probation itself.

It seemed to me that they were trying to do everything within their power to make my life as difficult as possible. To stop me from working, studying or doing voluntary work. Separating me from my family, friends and my culture. Dismissing the things that were most important in my life. It was about taking away all avenues of choice yet holding me up as solely responsible for every decision that I would make. It dawned on me one day – I didn't have a mobile phone, I couldn't socialise or publicly express my views, and any

work I did for the animals had to be done clandestinely – that probation were turning me into some sort of fucking 'sleeper cell'! On top of that there is an uncertainty about life that the threat of reimprisonment inspires. For example, a newsagent once challenged a twenty quid note I handed him on the suspicion that it was a fake – if he had called the authorities, without any due process or guilt being established, I could have been reimprisoned. It is this wider abuse of ex-prisoners, coupled with the experience of prison, that in my opinion encourages the high levels of reoffending we have in this country. However, once I got my head round living like this, I would appreciate the irony of it all – it became a period of politicalisation; being careful, watching what you're doing, focusing all the time on animal rights issues, permanently prepared for arrest – it is the perfect discipline, no doubt, for those engaging in direct action.

I would regularly explain to the probation officer that there was a great deal of onus on him; he only had a limited time and that he should use it productively: to engage, to explore ideas and find some mutual ground where we could both understand and learn. He was under the impression that me sitting in a room for ten minutes every now and then and threatening me with imprisonment for anything the authorities took a dislike to was going to have some sort of drastic effect on my political beliefs. I had seen this problem many times before; that the punishment of the convicted is often done by people who have little understanding of what they're doing. They judge others by their own standards and whilst they lack backbones and integrity, their opposition has an incredible strength fortified by the righteousness of their cause. In my life, I have the pleasure to say that I have met some of the most decent, caring and thoughtful people imaginable and have experienced true acts of giving and selflessness. People that have sacrificed great chunks of their lives to help others without reward or even acknowledgement. Compared to this, the altruistic claim of 'protecting the public' made by lazy and disinterested probation officers is plainly insulting. The very nature of my conviction, the SOCPA 145 charge that affords heightened legal protection for those involved with vivisection, made a clear distinction between the abusers and the general public. In fact, you would be hard pushed to find even a sizeable minority of the public that was aware of, let alone supported, the fact that animal liberationists are receiving long and disproportionate sentences for non-violent acts of compassion.

The logic of probation argues that licence conditions along with their work are needed to stop people reoffending. If ex-prisoners complete their licence period without incident, it is down to the work and influence of the probation officer. Yet, if they offend, that work and influence is forgotten about and the responsibility falls on the ex-prisoner. Therefore, the only independent decision an ex-prisoner can make is to offend. It was a conscious thought in my mind to do some provocative law breaking purely in protest of their work, but in situations like this, the bigger picture needs viewing. For me, probation was biased from the onset – their role was to serve the police and other nefarious organisations and implement whatever they wished, under the cover of the 'rehabilitation' and 'public protection' that probation claim to represent. Probation has little concern about the lives of the people it manages. It has neat little labels and classifications, and individuals are described and explained, including flaws in their characters, by people that have never even met them. It has no interest in listening or addressing the needs and concerns of the

people under its management, just as long as they keep their heads down and tread the well worn path of "I've learnt my lesson and won't do it again" then probation are happy, despite the fact that the UK has some of the highest prison numbers and reoffending rates in Europe. Any criticism or questioning of the system however can be explained away by mudslinging; "well, of course they're causing trouble, they're an extremist after all." The use of such a term is designed to cloud the issue and distort any debate. This label does not come with conviction and evaporates upon the completion of a sentence, but exists independently, related to political belief. After all, you pitch a tent outside St. Paul's and you're considered a 'terrorist' these days. As I will always be considered and described as an extremist, there is little incentive for me to change my ways. However, the only place 'extremism' exists is in the minds of these sad little people whose lives revolve around fearing any story of different culture or grass roots opposition. They know that if they were to attempt to answer the question of why reasonable, decent and intelligent people are prepared to break the law like others who were lionised by eternity, they would find themselves looking in the mirror, and at the injustice and inequality they perpetuate.

As they have failed in breaking the spirits of animal liberation prisoners, their repression will escalate. Sadly, they seem intent on making an example out of political prisoners, so we must be prepared to become examples as prisoners. It is not a prospect I relish, but history shows that struggles within the prison environment have wide reaching effects on the

outside world. I would encourage people not to co-operate with the probation service. No-one should wish to be a martyr and act in a manner that risks further punishment but a balance can be found. Stick to your conditions, but refuse to engage during appointments. Without question, in the last few years our movement for a kinder, better world based on respect for all life has taken some blows from those that care for little else than dirty money, but we should never let the force of their blows distort the strength of our movement. It is important in times like these that we refuse to be subdued, that we think critically, and redouble our efforts to stop the appalling tyranny and violence that is waged against all life. It is part of any struggle to suffer casualties – in a country like ours where peaceful protestors are killed or imprisoned; imprisonment is something that many activists should be prepared to face. It is nothing to fear, and a good prior-knowledge of life behind bars can help someone have a useful and productive experience. I have no prouder boast than to say that I stand shoulder to shoulder with some of the most courageous people in society and fight with them for a gentler world, where all life, regardless of species, race, sex or persuasion has the potential to live the free life they desire.

Free the animals,
Free the prisoners,

Lewis Pogson,

Former political prisoner.

Mel Broughton's letter

Over the last four and a half years of time spent in prison I have devoted much time reading and thinking. A considerable volume of books on science, philosophy and politics and how all this relates to animals has been consumed. Much time has also been spent reading published papers, reports and articles on the burgeoning field of animal awareness, emotion and intelligence. The more you read, the more you understand why your gut instinct about animals deserving basic rights is correct. They are not extreme, mad, anti-human or politically destabilising. They represent the logical and ethically necessary next step to a just and peaceful society.

The animal rights movement and how it leads and politicises the cause of animal rights is by its nature mired in the politics of human affairs. One thing was certain: the animal rights movement was always going to arrive. It's as necessary as every other social justice system that came before it. The challenges it encounters dwarf all others, and the vitriol and political intransigence it often faces, fed by the media, is a result of the very deep cultural, scientific and religious dogmas

that have fed the exploitation and abuse of animals for centuries.

So here we are in 2012 and for the UK at least the political situation for animals has soured. A government that for all intents and purposes appears to dislike animals and legislation aimed at improving their conditions. From badgers to circuses, to farm animals or lab animals, the overtures from the current government appear manifestly geared to turning the clock back. The fact that this position flies in the face of evidence clearly demonstrating that the suffering of animals isn't just limited to the physical but can encompass 'mental torture' makes the ethical bankruptcy even more unforgivable.

However, a glance across Europe and beyond sees other countries embracing animal rights and acting to change their laws. In Asia, countries move towards outlawing painful experiments on animals. Columbia's capital city Bogota votes to ban animals in circuses, quickly followed by Paraguay. Emergent animal rights groups are appearing in countries that a decade ago barely recognised human rights.

What of the future for animal rights

here in the UK, the place where it was born? Firstly, there needs to be a recognition that a backlash was inevitable and as such has to be taken in context. Also, it serves no one, least of all the animals, for the AR movement to allow a displacement of focus to have longer-term corrosive influences. People have differing political views and where these do not cause offence they should never be used to marginalise or ostracise others.

We are where we are and the job of achieving a justice system for animals based on their right not to be treated as things or property still has a long way to go. After the last four and a half years as a prisoner I continue to be optimistic. I base my optimism on the fact that the AR movement has created a momentum that is being taken up by interested parties outside of its core body. Much of the academic work now being done to educate the public about why animals matter has its roots in the day-to-day campaigning activities of AR advocates. Whilst some may wish to shy away from acknowledging the role the AR movement has had, it nevertheless remains the truth. There is also little doubt that things

will be trying for AR campaigns in the coming years, not least because maintaining focus and energy in the face of political/legal intransigence and prejudice is always draining. However, the prejudice and intransigence that has traditionally informed views about animals are eroding. Of course the legal system continues to view animals through a prejudicial prism of property and utility, but that cannot and will not endure.

It's up to the AR movement to recognise that its agenda must move with the times. Unity around the issues that reflect the growing awareness of the emotional commonality we and the animals share is vital. A focus on raising those issues in the right places is a prerequisite to moving forward. Using those best qualified to push at

the right doors is likewise imperative.

There is a continued need for grass roots AR campaigners to be a visible link to the public. Demonstrations, marches, stalls, vegan events and localised campaigns all have their part to play. However, all these activities need to be linked up in a way that promotes the themes, which legitimise the political demands made by activists on the animals' behalf. Whatever campaigns are running, they must engage with and use the most up to date evidence on animal awareness. A sympathetic body of professionals from disciplines including law, science, media and philosophy could act to advise and promote AR thinking in places from which it has otherwise been kept away. This is not 'pie in the sky' thinking; it's about recognising

the need to adapt and expand new strategies. So much groundwork has already been done that it seems self-defeating not to think big and boldly about the future.

I would like to thank everyone who has written to me and given their support during my time in prison. You will forgive me if, over this time, I haven't written much about my own position and feelings. I'm sure, like everyone else, I feel the animal rights ideal is bigger and more important than any other individual. Above all else I sincerely believe that the animals will get their day: it's only a matter of time and forethought.

Mel

International prisoners

(Updated 08.08.2012)

Nathan Block

****Released 14th May 2012 to halfway house****

Update 14th May 2012:
Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher are in halfway houses and they will be released on the 29th October 2012

Charges: Unrepentant eco-warriors convicted for the arsons of a SUV dealership and a genetic engineering tree farm in Oregon under the banner of ELF. Betrayed by all but two of their co-defendants, they have been in prison since 2006.

Email support:
solidaritywithsadieandexile@gmail.com

CCM Seattle
Community Corrections Office
2425 South 200 ST (AT FDC)
Seattle, WA 98198
USA



Jordan Halliday

****Released 21st July 2012****

Update from Jordan's support website:

Yesterday, our good friend Jordan Halliday was released from prison after serving 10 months for refusing to cooperate with a grand jury (See <http://www.greenisthenewred.com/blog/jordan-halliday-grand-jury-criminal-contempt/5546/>) that was fishing for information about the animal rights scene in Salt Lake City, UT. After refusing to cooperate with a grand jury in 2009, Halliday was jailed for 4 months in hopes that the sentence would make him talk. Halliday still resisted the grand jury. He was released and then swiftly indicted with criminal contempt of court for refusing to testify the same grand jury.

On July 27, 2010, Jordan pled guilty to the charge of criminal contempt of court.

Although he was sentenced to serve 10 months on November 3, 2010, Jordan's defense team filed an appeal which bought him some more time. The appeal was denied by the court and Jordan was arrested to start his sentence on January 9, 2012. Jordan's courage to resist the grand jury has been an inspirational act to us all, especially for the grand jury resisters to come. Check out this post where you can read a letter from Jordan talking about resisting the grand jury! Also check this link to see a perfect example of how to deal with a grand jury.

We are so happy that Jordan is now in the loving arms of friends and family outside of prison walls. It is vital to remember that prisoner support does not end with prisoner release. Prison is a fucked up and lonely place, right now Jordan needs our support more than ever. If you are on twitter (See: twitter.com/xacrox), please show jordan some love. If you are on facebook (See: www.facebook.com/pages/Support-Jordan-Halliday/107550725954849), tell him how happy you are that he's out!



Abdul Haqq (formerly Walter Bond) #37096-013

USP Marion CMU, PO Box 1000, Marion IL 62959

Abdul Haqq was arrested on July 23, 2010 after being tricked by his brother in a sting operation set up by the FBI and ATF. On February 11, 2011, Abdul was sentenced to 5 years for the 2010 ALF Lone Wolf arson at The Sheepskin Factory in Denver, Colorado.

On October 13, 2011, Abdul was sentenced an additional 7 years, 3 months for the ALF Lone Wolf arsons at Tandy Leather Factory in Salt Lake City and the Tiburon restaurant in Sandy, Utah, which sells foie gras. Abdul's experiences as a 19-year old slaughterhouse construction worker propelled him into veganism and a life focused on ending our culture's total enslavement and exploitation of other animals and the natural world. As a prisoner of war, Walter continues to influence and motivate other activists dynamically via his essays and personal statements, news of which has speedily traversed the globe over the internet. His entire philosophy and program of action is centered on these six words "Animal Liberation, Whatever It May Take!"

Birthday: 16th April

Support website:
www.supportwalter.org



Adrian Magdaleno Gonzalez

Adrian has been sentenced to 7 years 11 months and five days (he was detained in February 2011) and he's at the Reclusorio Norte del Distrito Federal Prison, Mexico.

The charges are threatening the social peace and damage to private property; he was linked to a bomb attempt at the Bank Banamex (sponsors of bullfighting) in September 2009 causing serious damage and also for a bomb on the subway construction in Mexico City, which is destroying wild ecosystems.

For more information or to send letters of support, email us at:
newsletter@arprisoners.org

Camille Marino

#2012016853

570 Clinton Street, Detroit MI 48226, USA

Update July 2012:

Notorious vivisector Donal O'Leary paid for Camille Marino to be jailed for 31 days in February 2012 and extradited from Florida to Michigan on 5 counts of "criminal contempt" because she refused to remove his information from negotiationisover.net.

Following an act of civil disobedience in May 2012, he had her charged with two 5-year felonies. She was free on a \$25,000 bond until her probable cause hearing on Friday, July 13. O'Leary had a Special Prosecutor appointed to get her bond revoked on that day. The judge declared Camille, "a danger to society", and threw her back in jail on a \$500,000 bond. Her entire defense rests on the right to free speech guaranteed by the 1st amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The best way to support Camille is to send a contribution to her legal fund via PayPal.

The immediate goal is \$8,000 to pay the attorney handling the defense and the court fees. Write to Camille at the jail where she awaits trial. Be sure to include your name and address in the body of the letter, so she can respond even if she is not given the mailing envelope.

Support website:
supportcamille.org



Marie Jeanette Mason

#04672-061

FMC Carswell, Federal Medical Center, P.O. Box

27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127, USA.

Marie Mason is a loving mother of two and a long-time activist in the environmental and labor movements. In March 2008, she was arrested by federal authorities for charges related to two acts of property destruction that occurred in 1999 and 2000 – damaging an office connected to GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) research, and destroying a piece of logging equipment. No one was injured in either act. She faced a Life sentence before accepting a plea bargain in September 2008.

Mason was sentenced on February 5, 2009 in federal court in Lansing, Michigan. She received almost 22 years – the longest sentence of any “Green Scare” prisoner. An appeal for a reduction in her sentence was denied in 2010.

The “Green Scare” is the name given to the recent arrests of animal rights and environmental activists who have been charged with acts of economic sabotage. Federal authorities have sought outrageous sentences (often Life in prison) and have publicly and legally labeled the activists as “terrorists” – despite the fact that no one has been killed or injured in any of the acts.

Birthday: 26th January

Support website:
supportmariemason.org

Marie Mason's Amazon Wish List: www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/20H9JWR4VGXTS/ref=cm_sw_su_w



Eric McDavid #16209-097

FCI Terminal Island, Federal Correctional Institution, PO BOX 3007, San Pedro, CA 90731, USA

Eric McDavid is a political prisoner, currently serving a 20 year sentence in federal prison for “thought crime”. He was arrested in January 2006 (as part of the government's ongoing “Green Scare” campaign against environmental and animal rights activists) after being targeted by an undercover informant who formulated a crime and entrapped Eric in it. Eric was targeted by the state for his political beliefs, and his case is important for everyone who dares to stand up.

Birthday: 7th October
Support website:
www.supporteric.org, info@supporteric.org



Daniel McGowan #63794-053

FCI Terre Haute – CMU, P.O. Box 33, Terre Haute, IN 47808, USA.

Sentenced to seven years imprisonment for his part in two arsons and his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.

Birthday: 2nd May

Support website:
www.supportdaniel.org



Steve Murphy #39013-177

FCI Beaumont Medium, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 26040, Beaumont, TX 77720 USA.

Steve was charged with a 2006 E.L.F. action in Pasadena, CA. and then sentenced to 5 years on April 5, 2010 after previously pleading guilty.

The complaint accused Steve of allegedly decommissioning a tractor and placing an incendiary device in an uninhabited housing development construction site in the name of the Earth Liberation Front.

Birthday: 3rd September

Support website:
www.supportsteve.org

Steve Murphy's Amazon Wishlist: www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/83KDANQ4QOWJ/ref=cm_sw_su_w

Get email updates, just send a blank email to: supportsteve-subscribe@supportsteve.org



Viktor Padellaro

Anstalten Kirseberg, Box 3097, 200 22 Malmö, Sweden

Viktor was sentenced to three years and six months in prison for arson at a McDonald's in Gothenburg, and for sending allegedly threatening letters to fur store owners, AstraZeneca's employees and others involved in animal abuse. Viktor has been detained on remand since his arrest in August 2011.

You can also send emails of support to: S.GBG.VEGAN@gmail.com and they will be printed out and sent to him.



Justin Solondz, 98291-011

FDC SEATAC, Federal Detention Centre, P.O. Box 13900, Seattle, WA 98198, USA.

Justin Solondz has been sentenced to 7 years in prison for part in arson from 2001, after being on the run and

then later in custody in China for a non-activism offence. He was accused of actions under the Earth Liberation Front/Animal Liberation Front. Briana Waters, his former comrade and friend turned informant.

Birthday: 3rd October



Kelly VanOrden ** Released 25th April 2012 **

Kellie was sentenced to 60 days on 12th March 2012 for pleading guilty for taking part in a mink liberation.



Victor VanOrden

** Released 09th May 2012 **

Victor VanOrden was sentenced to 5 years in prison on 02nd February 2012 after he pleaded guilty in Woodbury County District Court (USA) to releasing an animal from an animal facility and attempted third-degree burglary.



Joyanna Zacher

Released 14th May 2012 to halfway house (Similar circumstances as Nathan Block. See page 12).





Victor and Kelly VanOrden

July 2012 Last update: Thank you all!

You are reading this if you are wondering what has happened to Victor and Kellie. Kellie and Victor are now happily living in Maryland with their family. Thank you all for your support and gracious efforts to help these two wonderful activists. They are eternally grateful to you all. Victor has incurred yet one last legal bill which arrived just a couple days ago to his house. It's from the jail in Iowa that he was locked up in, and is in the amount of a couple thousand. They charged him \$50 for every night that he was there. If you would like to donate any further money you can do so by sending a personal check or money order to: Bonnie VanOrden (this is Victor's mom who is handling all the legal fees) 5145 Porterstown Road Keedysville, MD 21756 Thanks!

Support page: <http://supportkellieandvictor.blogspot.com/>

Help Daniel find a job

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In a nice change of pace from the usual tenor of our communications, we are happy to report some really good news: Daniel McGowan's stay in the CMU is coming to an end! Despite many punitive measures over the course of the years, Daniel has maintained a sterling record in prison and has accrued enough "good time" to take 1 year off his 7-year sentence. What is even more exciting is that he has qualified to serve the last 6-months of this time in a halfway house in Brooklyn, beginning in December 2012! After so many years, and so much antagonism from Federal authorities, we are overjoyed to welcome Daniel back home, where he belongs.

The support you all have shown over these past 5 years has helped Daniel get through what are undoubtedly the hardest years of his life. Now that he is on the verge of rejoining us, and never looking back upon these dark times, the focus of support for the Family and Friends of Daniel McGowan is in assisting him in his re-entry and securing him meaningful employment. Not only is finding a job an important condition of Daniel's being in the half-way house — in addition to his supervised release once he is done with his sentence — but it is also extremely important to Daniel himself, who joins thousands of other ex-prisoners who struggle to find employment because of their prior records.

Lots of people are looking for work these days, and it's a daunting task for anyone. However, while Daniel is as highly-motivated and hard-working as many others seeking employment, it is obvious that he faces serious hurdles in getting a job because of his conviction. Daniel is a warm, intelligent, passionate, and dedicated person and he would love to find employment at a place that is doing work he cares about and finds meaningful. Over the years many of you have asked how you can help — helping Daniel find such a job would be the most important thing you could ever do for him.

HELP DANIEL FIND A JOB:

In addition to having a Bachelor's degree, Daniel completed a paralegal course as well as every continuing education and vocational course

Goodbye Lonesome George

In tribute to the passing of Lonesome George, the last Galapagos Tortoise.

Good-bye Lonesome George

Born when the Titanic

Sank beneath the icy waves,

Witness to a hundred years of loss.

Born to be a storied creature of Galapagos,

And sadly, sought by sailors for the soup,

They only passing by endlessly marauding
through their thoughtless days.

When did they find you, old soul,

Wandering the rocky crags of home,

Picked clean by invading ungulates and bipeds, yourself

Starving and alone?

Perhaps you were a frisky teen of 50

When they packed you off the island in a hurry,

to exhibit in a Quito zoo.

And what should have been a troubling issue of our collective shame, became

A curiosity for tourists.

And all the exotic ladies that they brought

From strange and varied tribes,

Were not enough to lure you from your grief.

What use to romance the moon

In the end of days?

And so you took a pass

On the second century that your kind are heir to -

And slipped beneath the waves of time.

Good night and good luck,

Sweet Lonesome George,

Good-bye.

I will dream you back to Paradise,

Or at least, try.

Marie Mason



available (over 25!) while in prison despite limited opportunities for education, as well as frequent moves. He is extremely driven and has a broad skill-set that he is looking to utilize at a NYC-based, non-profit organization. Much of Daniel's career experience from 1997 onward is within the non-profit world he has ample experience in development/fundraising, communication and IT positions. Daniel has a particular interest in working as a paralegal for civil liberties organizations but would welcome and appreciate work in any of these fields/areas:

- *Civil liberties/Free speech
- *Social justice
- *Prison reform
- *Food justice/security

- *Urban agriculture
- *Recycling
- *Reproductive rights
- *LGBT issues
- *Anti-war
- *Climate change
- *Harm reduction/Drug policy
- *Prisoner re-entry
- * "Green-collar"
- *Alternative energy
- *Legal
- *Sustainable transport
- *Environmental justice
- *Domestic violence

If you work for a NYC-based non-profit, have a close friend, partner or contact at one, or have a specific organization in mind that might be open to hiring Daniel, we'd love to hear from you!

All emails can be directed to friendsofdanielmcg@yahoo.com

Please put "jobs" in the subject line.

His resume will be made available upon request.

****Daniel is still in prison, in the CMU, and will be until the end of 2012.****

Support the cause! Daniel's, Marie's, Steve's, Eric's and Abdul's merchandising

<http://plpress.bigcartel.com/product/support-eric-mcdavid-t-shirt>



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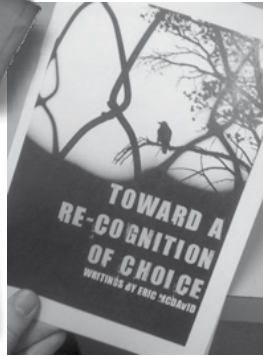
<http://supportmariemason.org/merchandise/>

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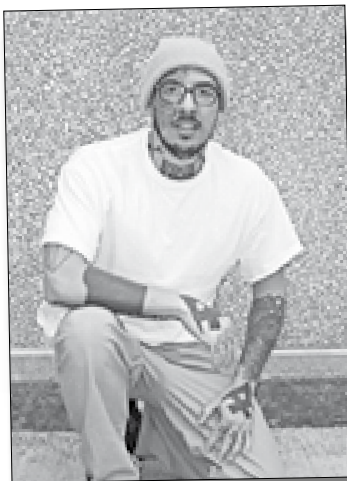
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'Toward A Re-Cognition of Choice' is a collection of writings by political prisoner Eric McDavid. 100% of the funds go to Eric.

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Interview with Abdul Haqq (formerly Walter Bond)

Walter Bond is currently serving a federal prison sentence of 12 years and 3 months for A.L.F. arson attacks on the Sheepskin Factory in Denver, Colorado, Tandy Leather Factory in Salt Lake City, Utah and Tiburon Restaurant in Sandy, Utah, resulting in almost two million dollars in damages. This interview was conducted about 3 months prior to Bond's final sentencing date. The following interview was facilitated by Carol Glasser.

ARPS: According to your support page, you have been dedicated to the work of animal liberation and anti-capitalism for over 15 years. Can you please describe how and when you became involved in activism, in particular activism geared toward animal liberation?

Abdul: In the winter of 1996, when I was 19 years old, I got a job with a company named Dakota Mechanical.

Their home office was in Jefferson, South Dakota; however, most of their work crews were scattered around the Midwest and Iowa in particular. I was hired as a forklift operator and apprentice plumber. I worked building two separate slaughterhouses. One in Logansport, Indiana – which was a brand new facility – and one in Perry, Iowa, where we built an extension to an already running "kill floor." Both slaughterhouses were IBP (Iowa Beef Producers), which have over twenty death camps in the state of Iowa for pigs alone. During the six months that I was employed at the Perry, Iowa facility, I saw every single area of production and confinement. I witnessed daily the profound cruelty that is simply industry standards in "pork production," culminating in viewing a 500-pound pig being beat to death with blunt force by IBP workers. This particular individual animal had escaped his leg hold shackle and went

running off the kill floor bleeding from the throat. As he was beaten to death I also witnessed my work crew cheering and high-fiving each other, as if it were a sporting event. This event had a very profound effect on me, a very internal effect.

Before that day I had always viewed the carnage as a necessary evil, but after that day I began to question all of it. Within 24 hours of that nameless hog's death I went vegetarian, within two weeks I quit my job, and within 10 months I was vegan and studying any book or information I could find about animal rights. Ironically, at this exact time in my life I came across a CD at a local record store. The band was called Earth Crisis and the CD was titled Destroy the Machines. On the back was a dedication to the vegan straight edge. After listening to the music and reading the lyrics I decided that the movement for total liberation would be my life's work. From then through the

last 15 years I have been an activist. My main focus for most of those years was vegan outreach and education of the public and also working directly with animals at sanctuaries and rescues. As time went on I began to feel disempowered always picking up the pieces of human cruelty. It seems I was constantly viewing or helping animals that had suffered so terribly at the hands of speciesist human oppressors. I finally got sick of it. Talking with people was simply not direct enough, in the context of how animals suffer and die. I believed then, as I do now, that the enormity of this oppression and murder deserved a severe response. To that end, I became an illegal direct activist, employing arson as a tactic to not only shut down businesses that make money from animals' dead bodies, but also to bring these issues to light in the media.

I became an operative under the banner of, and according to, the guidelines of the Animal Liberation Front. I authored two communiqués under the name ALF Lone Wolf and passed them anonymously to the media, giving a brief explanation of why the arsons were committed. Today, as a prisoner for those actions, my activism consists of writing. I mainly try to explain the philosophy, tactics, and ideology of abolition animal liberation activism. I do this through provocative articles written primarily in the manifesto "this is how it is" style.

ARPS: For what reasons were you targeted by law enforcement?

Abdul: I was targeted by law enforcement because my brother called the FBI Crime Tips Hotline after he learned there was a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons involved in the arson at the Sheepskin Factory in Denver. After reviewing the discovery documents in my case, it's clear that no government agency had any clue that it was me until my brother called them out of the blue. It's also clear that his motivation was reward money, which incidentally, he never got paid. In order to collect he would have to testify at my trial and since I plead guilty and waived my right to trial, he got nothing. In any event, after the arson at the Tiburon Restaurant, the stress of being homeless, and my ALF campaigns had caught up with me. I was worn out both mentally and physically. I had recently contacted my brother and he was curious as to why I was seemingly homeless, unemployed

and wandering around the United States. In a moment of weakness and against my better judgment I told him to Google the Sheepskin Factory in Denver and that's what I'd been up to. The first website that came up on the search engine was an animal rights website. After he saw that he then began reading about the Sheepskin Factory arson in the mainstream media online where he found out about the reward. Within 48 hours of our phone conversation he was working with the ATF and FBI.

For the next four weeks our phone conversations and my wanderings around Salt Lake City were monitored. He lured me back to Colorado with promises of money and a place to stay and rest – even going so far as to send me pictures of my nieces and nephews I have never met. I went to Denver to meet with my brother who had traveled to Colorado from Iowa under the false pretense of helping our half-brother move. He got a hotel room, which I found out later was being audio and video monitored by the Feds. Tired from my travels and happy to see my brother after many years we began to talk. He began telling me about crimes he had committed and soon we were talking away. It was then that I gave him a rather detailed account about my arsons, after which he drove me up to the northern suburbs to talk to an old employer about some construction work. I was under the illusion that I would see my brother later that evening. Instead I was arrested by the FBI in the front yard of the house my brother had dropped me off at. Once under arrest I was interrogated and told by the cops that if I did not speak with them they would charge my brother with my crimes. They told me that anything I would say could only help me. I refused to say anything, not one word. My interrogation lasted maybe 10 minutes, after which time no recognizable federal agent has ever asked me about anything again.

Of course now, in my prison cell, as I reflect back on that meeting with my brother, it is the biggest regret of my life. However, by working alone in my illegal animal liberation campaign, I was able to keep that mistake limited to only me having to deal with the repercussions. And already I've begun making peace with my regret. While it is true that I will always hate my brother absolutely and vociferously, I also know that it was an honest mistake on my part. I had taken on more stresses in my life than ever before and was in a vulnerable and compromised position

and the FBI and my brother had perfect timing in exploiting that.

ARPS: Can you please describe the legal charges against you? Do any of them include charges under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA)?

Abdul: In Colorado I was charged with one count of federal arson. It's considered federal because the business itself is involved in interstate commerce; meaning they ship and receive items across state lines just as nearly every business does. And one count of "threats acts and violence against an animal enterprise" under the AETA. I received a five-year sentence for the arson and also five years concurrent for the AETA charge; meaning I did not get any additional time for my AETA charge. But I do now have the label of domestic terrorist, which may affect my security rating within the prison system and definitely does whenever I am moved from one facility to another.

Currently, at the time of this interview, I am in Utah and have just plead guilty to my two remaining arson charges which are also federal cases. In exchange for my pleading guilty the government agreed to drop my two AETA enhancements. Since I already have one on my record from Colorado and the enhancements do not affect my time regardless it is literally no help to me. Which is of course why they allowed it.

The ridiculous thing about AETA in my cases is that it's an enhancement that alleges my arsons are made worse because of them being animal rights related. What is the logic here? Had I been burning things down at random because of compulsion or pyromania, that would be better? Surely I would not have faced domestic terrorism enhancements even if those fires would have resulted in death! But since I had an animal liberation message it's worse... only to the government. I might add at this point also that it's not an accident that no one was harmed. I took many security precautions to ensure that all I was engaging in was property damage.

It's a strange type of terrorism that harms no life. I try not to let buzz words bother me, but equating me or the Animal Liberation Front with organizations that behead people on live video streams is ludicrous! The true terrorists are those industries that perpetuate the animal and earth holocaust that is raging around the world. Wherever mechanized society

exists there you will find billions of victims of true terrorism. Mainly our Mother Earth, her animal nations and many people deemed "expendable humanity" by the power elite.

ARPS: The media reported on some of the actions for which you were charged before they were tied to you. How did the media initially portray these actions? Is it any different from how they portray you or these actions now?

Abdul: It's true that the "Lone Wolf" arsons caught the eye of local media in Denver and Salt Lake City. But I feel that outside of the animal lib community the mainstream media did not want to pay too much attention. The tone of much of the television coverage was very matter-of-fact but they did read the communiqués in their entirety and gave a fair amount of attention to what the Animal Liberation Front is and some brief history of past actions.

During the time I was first arrested I was an easy target for criticism being as I am somewhat of a spectacle with half my face tattooed and "vegan" tattooed across my throat. The media at once set out to vilify me and make me look like a hypocrite or lunatic. That did not at all shock me. What did, however, was the initial response from the animal rights community. The first letter I ever received in jail was from some anonymous person accusing me of eating burgers at a BBQ and being nothing but a joke to most "real animal rights advocates." The first interview I ever granted was with some animal welfarist creep that scolded me about someone burning down his mother's house and then generally poking fun at me and my tattoos. It was only after I debated him into a corner three of four questions in a row that his tone began to change and he admitted I actually may have some brains after all. It was shortly thereafter that I decided to start writing statements and articles. I figured the only way to combat the negative media about me and the militant struggle for animal liberation was to show everyone that I have thought deeply about the issues and spent years verifiably fighting for this cause. Later on I kept writing because I love to and it's very important for me to stay as active as I can. In this way I am able to reach more people now than I ever was able to with arson. Still, I will never forget how so many reactive, so-called animal rights activists and anarchists were incredibly quick to try and assassinate my character without ever knowing me.

My first major hurdle was not the mainstream media, their response was predictable. My first hardships were immediate and internal. I also will never forget a finite few people that I had never before met in my life that gave me, and have given me, support that put my mind at ease. The good Doctor Jerry Vlasak, Nicoal Sheen and Greg Kelly come to mind here.

After those first few months it became obvious that the tide had turned and that many of those who thought I was a crackpot now think everything I have to say is very valid. The mainstream media seems to take me and my message of animal liberation, whatever it may take, more seriously as well. Of course their vilification of me never stops. But I'm fine with that so long as there is talk about the animals' plight. At any rate, I made a conscious decision from the outset of my arrest not to be reactive. When I speak out I say what I mean, and what I feel, regardless of what the media thinks or my supporters or even courts of law. I'm constantly re-evaluating my writings and statements to make sure I am not being provocative simply for shock values sake or holding back to appeal to more people. I think the countless billions of animals we cannot save at least deserve to have a few people keep it real and speak clear truths and also an underground army to secure their lives and freedom.

ARPS: The experience of activism and of incarceration can be extremely traumatic. What were the hardest emotional, mental, and physical experiences you have had?

Abdul: Within activism the hardest part for me is never feeling like I'm doing enough. The burden of compassion is such that the more you care, the more you act, the more of yourself you give away. You give until there is nothing left and then you realize you cannot singlehandedly change institutionalized cruelty. That's the point when many activists burn out and stop trying. They fail to recognize that perpetual struggle against these atrocities and oppressions is the victory! And that the relentless feeling of not doing enough is par for the course. But still, it is difficult and at times depressing.

As far as incarceration is concerned, I'm still wrapping my mind around the fact that I will most likely spend several years of my life in a cage. My parents are old and I wonder if I will see them again as a free man. I worry about what kind of hell hole the prison system

will find for me since they seem to hate my defiance and outspokenness so much. All of these things I am still digesting. There is no way for me to accurately portray the life I now lead. If it were just jail, that's not such a big deal, several million people have gone to prison for long periods of time. Being able to cope with that is not at all insurmountable. But add to that dealing with your own brother snitching you off, the media, my own activism which never stops, courts, plea agreements, struggling with an inadequate vegan diet and continually trying to motivate a movement of lazy, whiny Americans to liberate animals and get passionately active, mentally and emotionally. It's too much for my brain. It's like if you were to try to eat everything all at once, too much to digest! So I just focus on whatever is on my plate for the day.

And ultimately, nothing that I'm going through will ever compare to what animals suffer at the hands of speciesist human oppressors. For entertainment, food, vivisection, clothing and hundreds of other novel and unnecessary reasons animals live and die in conditions of filth and squalor, sadism and pain that we cannot even truly comprehend. Actually empathizing with their plight never ceases to lessen my own.

ARPS: I know that activism has its rewards, and incarceration my even have some positive aspects. What have your most rewarding experiences been?

Abdul: In activism my rewarding experiences have been profound. I have had my face licked by baby llamas; which, by the way, are some of the cutest little critters I have ever seen! I have learned how to gobble at just the right octave to get turkeys to gobble back in unison. I have felt a liberated rooster purr in my lap and then three weeks later try to peck my ankles off! I've gotten a neck massage by a python. I made friends with a goat named Jeffrey who was just as cantankerous as myself. One time a goose protected me from a pig that was bullying me and that same pig, Lucas, used to demand that I give him a good ear scratch. I have educated people about animal liberation and veganism and am proud to say that more than a few people in Colorado and the Midwest went vegan because of me. I've argued with animal abusers that were quite confused about how to intimidate a 6'2" 200-pound vegan straightedger covered in tattoos! In the

underground I experienced the true freedom and effectiveness that can only be known with a bandana and cover of darkness. I've gone to sleep still smelling like gasoline and with a big smile on my face. These are just a few of my amazing experiences as an animal liberationist and direct activist.

It seems that the more I have given of myself the more I have gained in return. Interconnectedness is like that. Despite the hardships I am absolutely honored to speak, act and defend all innocent life and I will never forget that it is a privilege and my duty to do so. And prison, just like all things, has its good and bad. On the positive side, it's a far simpler life. I prefer real experiences and interactions. There is a certain honesty to prison and a lot less pretense. Modern civilization has become a fear-based culture of subjectivity and fakery. In prison you know who is friend or foe. You know who the oppressor is. They come here every day and we call them correctional officers. They even know they're here to oppress us. At least everyone is not busy trying to look like a good person but not actually being a good person.

I'm able to read and write as much as I want, undisturbed. I am able to have the time to focus on exercise and sport. And I plan on learning Spanish fluently, writing a couple books and earning a degree while incarcerated. Time in prison is only a detriment if you don't

use it.

ARPS: What advice do you have for other activists regarding political repression and challenging the AETA?

Abdul: As far as challenging the AETA, I don't have much practical advice since that falls very much into a realm of activism that I have no experience in – mainly, the political. I definitely will say that in a court of law, in my experience, AETA is more about attaching a label to you. If I were facing the AETA charge alone I would fight it until the end. Legally, the only way to challenge any statute and put it on trial is to not plead guilty and make the government define it. That's one of the main problems with AETA – it's too fluid and elusive. But as I said, in my case it was just a splinter in the two-by-four.

Regarding the political repression of the earth and animal liberation movements my advice is never give into it. One must understand that when a government seeks to dismantle a social justice cause they do so through intimidation and often violence. They also seek to scare many, by punishing one. We must think in terms bigger than just ourselves. Ours is and must always remain a selfless movement. This is the price of admission for any revolutionary cause. And this is a revolutionary cause because we seek a change in human society diametrically opposed to the status quo.

Everything has been built thus far from the standpoint that our Mother Earth and her animal nations are ours to use in any way we wish. Historically, these types of drastic changes have and do occur, but not without a multifaceted fight on all fronts. These changes don't occur without sacrifices, passion, single-pointed focus, correct tactics in action and defiance in the face of adversity!

Our movement has come nowhere close to paying its dues; we are nowhere near earning our right to change the institutionalized brutality. Will we? No one can honestly answer that, not right now. But the true beginning of that process starts with you and with me. It begins with a resolve to never lose hope, to never lose heart! The path of action that that resolve leads each individual to is tailor-made for each person's individual nature, talents and abilities. The answer to repression is revolutionary progression! In other words, the way is through it. Inevitably, we answer to those voiceless animals that have no viable representation in the human world; and what they would want us to do is the same thing you would want another to do if you were in their predicament. You would want freedom from fear, torture, murder, rape and objectification by any means necessary and whatever it may take!

Letter from Eric McDavid's partner, written 14.01.2012

Dear friends,

Today marks the 6th year of Eric's arrest and incarceration. I'm not quite sure why I always feel compelled to commemorate this day – the memories it awakens bring so much pain, anger and frustration. It is not something I really want to remember. It is also something I can never forget. That day forever altered the course of Eric's life – and the lives of all his loved ones.

But I also know that it is our responsibility to remember. To remember why Eric was arrested in the first place – not because anything burned down or was damaged, but because he dared to think he could change things.

And that he didn't have to wait for permission from those who would

never give it. Eric was arrested – and sentenced to an inordinate amount of time – because of his politics.

We also must remember what it really means to show solidarity – with Eric and all of our other comrades behind bars. We must remember that they are still here. They are all still a part of our movements and we need to act – every day – to include them. And, most importantly, we must carry on the struggles for which they have given so much.

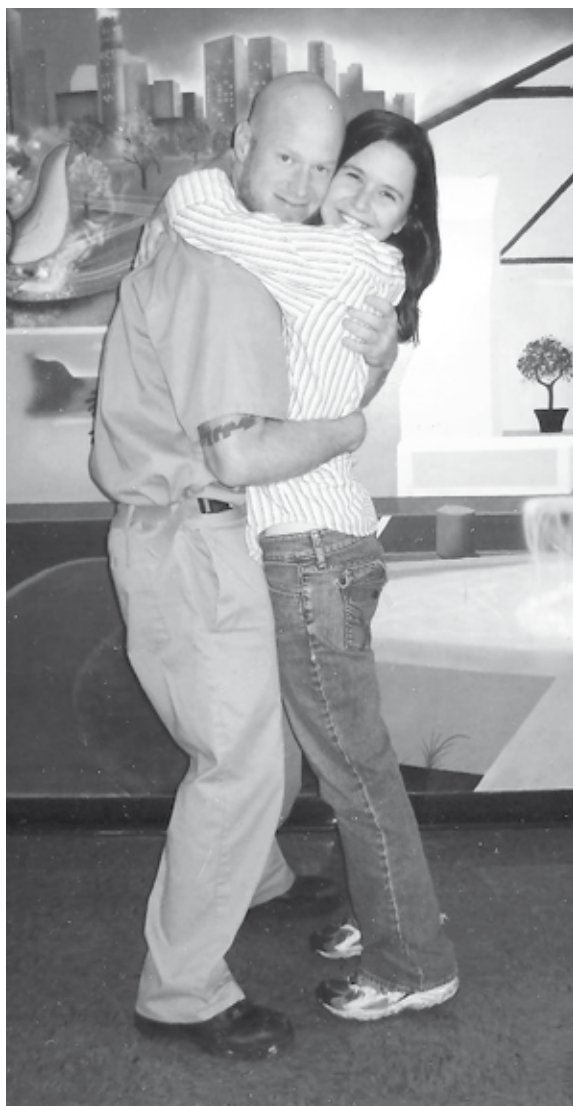
And we need to remember that sometimes things do change overnight.

Sometimes our loved ones are ripped from us. There is no way to really prepare for such a heartwrenching experience, but what we can do is remember to use the time we have

now to be good to each other. Love fearlessly. Never take for granted the time we share with each other. It is a precious gift.

Recently, Eric and I had something returned to us that was taken 6 years ago. I have no one to thank. It should never have been taken in the first place. But I cannot tell you how overjoyed I was at its return. On November 21st, during our visit at Terminal Island, Eric reached across the "coffee table" sitting between us and grabbed my hands. Eric and I had not been allowed to sit and hold hands in almost 6 years. Human touch is such an integral part of leading a healthy, happy life. Not being able to touch the people you love is tortuous. It is cruel and inhumane.

(Imagine watching a loved one cry and



not being able to wipe away their tears, or hold their hand...) Touch deepens our connections with each other – it moves beyond language into a realm

that words cannot contain or explain. Of course, the powers that be know all of this, which is probably why it was denied us for so long. We are acutely aware that it could be taken away again at any moment. But for now we are reveling in every second of it.

And so I remind myself of this, too – don't ever take these things for granted.

Eric and I both would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you. It is abundantly clear that so many people have not forgotten. Eric continues to get mail from people all across the globe – please keep it coming! He loves hearing from you. You are his connection to the outside world – to the movements and places and ideas he cares about. Keeping those connections is incredibly important to him.

And to all of you who have donated to Eric's support fund – you have no idea how grateful we are. These donations not only help Eric with things like stamps, food and personal items from commissary and time on the telephone – they also help fund visits for him and his loved ones. These visits are key

to keeping everyone sane. It would be impossible for us to visit as often as we do without your help.

Eric and I feel your support on a daily basis. "Thank you" could never be enough...

Eric is 6 years into an almost 20 year sentence. Sometimes that thought is almost overwhelming. But then I remember. I remember Eric and who he is and how he has held onto that throughout this whole ordeal. I remember all of you and how much love and support we have felt coming from all directions. And I remember that we can do this.

With so much love,

Jenny (Eric's partner)

PS: Please remember our other friends, too! Marie Mason is turning 50 this month. Visit her website: www.supportmariemason.org for more details on how to send her a birthday card or a note of support.